

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY BLANTYRE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7128

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AMEMBASSY LONDON

S E C R E T BLANTYRE 784

1. BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER RITCHIE ON JUNE 20 INFORMED ME OF FOLLOWING REGARDING BRITISH ARMY TRAINING TEAM TO MALAWI (BATT) AND RELATED DEVELOPMENTS:

A. PER MUTUAL AGREEMENT ARRIVED AT WITH GOM MAY 31, BATT WILL BE ALLOWED TO RUN DOWN AND PHASE OUT BY OCTOBER 1974. SMALL NUMBER OF TECHNICAL (WORKSHOP) PERSONNEL WILL REMAIN THROUGH MARCH 1975, AFTER WHICH THERE WILL BE NO BRITISH MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO MALAWI IN-COUNTRY. GOM HAD EXPRESSED WISH RETAIN SMALL NUMBER OF TECHNICIANS, PRIMARILY IN COMMUNICATIONS AREA, BUT HMG OPTED FOR COMPLETE PULL-OUT BY MARCH 1975.

B. IN PRINCIPLE UK WILL CONTINUE OFFER TRAINING FOR SOME MALAWI MILITARY/SECURITY PERSONNEL IN BRITAIN. HOWEVER THIS PROGRAM WILL BE ATTENUATED DUE TO CUTBACKS IN DEFENSE BUDGET INTRODUCED BY NEW HMG.

C. BRITISH DEFENSE ATTACHE WILL ASSUME CHARGE OF SMALL NUMBER OF REMAINING BRITISH ARMY TECHNICIANS POST-OCTOBER 1974. HOWEVER HIGH COMMISSIONER PLANS ABOLISH DATT POSITION AS UNPRODUCTIVE AND WILL NOT REPLACE BRITISH DATT AFTER HIS SCHEDULED DEPARTURE JULY 1975.

D. BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER FEELS FAIRLY CERTAIN THAT SOME SORT OF BEHIND-THE-SCENES DEAL HAS BEEN WORKED OUT WITH
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SOUTH AFRICA FOR PROVISION OF KEY TECHNICIANS FOR MALAWI

ARMY.

2. ON TWO OCCASIONS RECENTLY MALAWI ARMY COMMANDER M/GEN MATEWERE HAS INQUIRED OF US DEFENSE ATTACHE WHETHER US COULD PROVIDE SPACES FOR TRAINING MALAWI MILITARY PERSONNEL IN US. (FYI: BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER OPINED THIS MIGHT REFLECT MALAWIAN DISSATISFACTION WITH EXPERIMENT WITH SENDING MALAWIAN CADETS TO KENYA FOR TRAINING.) RECENTLY CHIEF OF GOM SECURITY SERVICE ALSO INQUIRED ABOUT POSSIBLE TRAINING IN US FOR MALAWI SPECIAL BRANCH PERSONNEL. THESE ARE SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS IN THAT FOR PAST SEVERAL YEARS NEITHER MALAWI ARMY NOR OTHER SECURITY ELEMENTS HAVE INDICATED ANY SERIOUS INTERES IN USG-PROVIDED TRAINING.

3. COMMENT: EMBASSY AND DATT REGARD MATEWERE'S REQUESTS AS POSSIBLE REACTION TO RUNDOWN OF BRITISH MILITARY ASSISTANCE. IF SO, WE PRESUMABLY MAY EXPECT RECEIVE FURTHER REQUESTS FOR USG ASSISTANCE. FROM EMBASSY'S STANDPOINT, ASSUME OUR PRINCIPAL LINE WOULD BE THAT WE HAVE NO WISH SUPPLANT UK OR ANY OTHER COUNTRY AS MAJOR PROVIDER OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO MALAWI. ACCEPTING SMALL NUMBER OF MALAWI ARMY PERSONNEL FOR IN-US TRAINING WOULD NOT APPEAR TO GO COUNTER TO THIS BASIC APPROACH PROVIDING LIMITS OF USG ASSISTANCE IS MADE CLEAR TO GOM. POSSIBLY MODEST USG ASSISTANCE WOULD HAVE VALUE IN DIMINISHING EXCLUSIVITY OF MALAWI DEPENDENCE ON SOUTH AFRICA FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE, SHOULD LATTER EVENTUALLY SURFACE.

4. IN CIRCUMSTANCES WOULD APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT'S VIEWS/ GUIDANCE ON LINE TO TAKE SHOULD WE RECEIVE FURTHER, PERHAPS EVEN OFFICIAL GOM REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE.
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